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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/03/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS INDIAN HOME MINISTER ON MUMBAI
ATTACK INFORMATION-SHARING

REF: STATE 314 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford. Reasons: 1.4(B, D).

¶1. (U) This message contains an action request in Para 10.

¶2. (S) Summary: In a January 3 meeting with the Ambassador, Home Minister Chidambaram said that the Indian government would decide "as early as possible" whether to concur in the U.S. sharing information with Pakistani authorities that had been gathered by U.S. law enforcement authorities during the Mumbai investigation. Chidambaram said he would be in contact with External Affairs Minister Mukherjee on January 3 regarding this matter. He requested that the U.S. use very restricted channels to provide the Indian government with information that originated with the government of Pakistan and which is being transferred with that government's consent. After reviewing the information, Chidambaram appreciated its importance and acknowledged that there were novel elements in it which India had not been aware of from its investigation. He reiterated the importance of the U.S. being provided access to detained attacker Kasab's father because it would be definitive on the matter of Kasab's Pakistani citizenship. Chidambaram disclosed that the Ministry of External Affairs would be providing a dossier this week on the Indian government's investigation into the attacks to countries whose citizens had been killed and would disseminate a sanitized version more broadly. End Summary.

Chidambaram Reads the File, Wants To Restrict Distro

¶3. (S) The Ambassador met January 3 with Home Minister Chidambaram and passed him a read copy of the significant additional information referred to in reftel. (Note: The information was provided to the Minister directly to ensure that he received it quickly and without any diminishment in value that could arise if it had been passed to him through other channels. The copy was retrieved after the Minister had read it. End Note.)

¶4. (S) The Ambassador told Chidambaram that the information had originated from top Pakistani officials in very sensitive positions and had been passed to the Indian Government with

the permission of these officials. He underlined the significance of the information and the fact that Pakistan had authorized its disclosure. The Ambassador also stressed the importance of keeping the information in restricted channels and avoiding the disclosure of the information or its source.

¶15. (S) Before commenting on the information itself and India's next steps in sharing its own investigative information, Chidambaram made clear that if the information was passed through other channels commonly used for such intelligence information, it would be very difficult to prevent leakage. Chidambaram suggested that for now, the information should be provided on an eye's only basis to the Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister, Home Minister and Defense Minister. (Note: He did not mention National Security Advisor Narayanan).

Chidambaram On Value of Information

¶16. (S) After reading the material, Minister Chidambaram expressed satisfaction at receiving the information. He said that it "more or less" confirmed what the Indians had discovered through their investigation. He acknowledged it threw new light on the involvement of Indian nationals in the Mumbai attacks. He understood that at least one of the subjects mentioned in the information had been arrested, but was unsure whether another Indian national identified in the document had been detained.

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¶17. (S) Chidambaram stressed once again that Indian attached significant importance to the U.S. government's ability to interview the father of detained attacker Muhammad Ajmal Amir Kasab, who Chidambaram feared may have already been "eliminated." After successive queries by the Ambassador, Chidambaram explained that India wanted information (via the FBI) from Kasab's father because it would be unimpeachable proof that Kasab was indeed a Pakistani national. Chidambaram said India had no realistic expectation that the Pakistanis would provide the Indians access to Pakistani detainees Zarar Shah or Zakiur Rahman Lakhvi to confirm details of the attack and was skeptical whether either would be turned over to the United States for prosecution. The information that Pakistan had provided through the U.S. did not indicate the nationality of the attackers. He stressed that proof that Kasab was a Pakistani national could most readily be provided if the U.S. could have access to Kasab's father.

Ambassador Pushes for Concurrence

¶18. (S) The Ambassador reiterated the importance that India concur in the U.S. sharing information with Pakistani authorities that had been gathered by U.S. law enforcement authorities during the Mumbai investigation. Chidambaram said he would be in touch with External Affairs Minister Mukherjee about the matter. He expected a decision very soon (Note: We believe in the next 24 hours) on whether the FBI could share the information obtained during the investigation in Mumbai "to the extent necessary" and "according to your best judgment."

India's Dossier On the Attack

¶19. (S) While pledging to respond to our renewed request as early as possible, Chidambaram said that the question of information sharing may be overtaken by events because the Ministry of External Affairs was going to release information this week on the Indian investigation to the countries who had lost citizens in the Mumbai attacks. A sanitized version would be made available more widely through the Ministry.

Chidambaran said he expected that given the wide dissemination of this information, he expected that Pakistan was likely to receive it as well. (Note: The Ambassador was asked on Friday to attend a briefing at the External Affairs Ministry on Monday.)

Action Request

¶10. (S) We seek Department concurrence in providing the information to the Indian Government in the more restricted format suggested by Minister Chidambaran. It will have the practical effect of enhancing perceptions of the value of the information and the fact of exchange while fixing responsibility (at least for some limited period of time) for any leakage.

MULFORD